CLAIMS

1.   A multimedia authoring system, comprising:

a graphical user interface for enabling a user to interactively author a presentation using a timeline comprising one or more first tracks for temporal media and one or more second tracks for nontemporal media, and for specifying a layout indicating an association of each of the one or more first tracks and one or more second tracks with a display location;

a viewer having access to the timeline and layout and having an output providing display information for displaying the temporal media and the nontemporal media combined according to the timeline and the layout, for each of one or more specified times along the timeline; and

an encoder having access to the timeline and the layout and having an output for providing a streaming media presentation containing the temporal media and events associated with references to the nontemporal media combined according to the timeline and the layout.

2.   The multimedia authoring system of claim 1, further comprising a transfer tool for transferring one or more files including the streaming media presentation to a first streaming media server and one or more data files including the nontemporal media to a second server.

3.   The multimedia authoring system of claim 2, wherein the encoder confirms availability of the data files before encoding the presentation.

4.   The multimedia authoring system of claim 2, further comprising means for previewing the streaming media presentation from the first streaming media server.

5.   The multimedia authoring system of claim 2, further comprising means for previewing the streaming media presentation before transferring of the streaming media presentation by the transfer tool.

6.   A graphical user interface comprising:

a timeline comprising one or more first tracks for temporal media and one or more second tracks for nontemporal media, including a table of contents track, wherein the

nontemporal media includes one or more elements comprising one or more characters, each associated with a point in time on the table of contents track; and

a display window in which the temporal media and nontemporal media are displayed with timing defined by the timeline, and wherein selection of the displayed characters of the one or more elements in the table of contents track initiates display of the temporal and nontemporal media from the point in time of the element.

7.   The graphical user interface of claim 6, further comprising:

a layout specification indicating an association between each of the one or more first tracks and one or more second tracks and a display location.

8.   A multimedia presentation comprising:

a plurality of streaming media presentations created using a timeline comprising one or more first tracks for temporal media and one or more second tracks for nontemporal media, wherein each of the streaming media presentations has an event in the one or more second tracks to initiate playback of a subsequent one of the streaming media presentations; and

a document in a markup language including hyperlinks to each of the plurality of streaming media presentations.

9.   A graphical user interface for authoring a multimedia presentation, comprising:

a timeline comprising one or more first tracks enabling a user to specify a sequence of temporal media and one or more second tracks enabling a user to specify nontemporal media in a temporal relationship with the temporal media;

a layout specification enabling a user to specify an association between each of at least one of the one or more second tracks and a location; and

an output through which the temporal media are presented, and in which at least the nontemporal media are presented at locations defined by the layout specification and with a temporal relationship with the temporal media as specified by the timeline, for each of one or more specified times along the timeline.

10.   The graphical user interface of claim 9, wherein the layout specification further enables a user to specify an association between at least one of the one or more first tracks and a display location.

5   11.   The graphical user interface of claim 9, further comprising a time bar associated with the timeline and manipulable by a user to specify the one or more specified times.

12.   A graphical user interface for authoring a multimedia presentation, comprising:
        a timeline comprising one or more first tracks enabling a user to specify a sequence of
10   temporal media and one or more second tracks enabling a user to specify nontemporal media in a temporal relationship with the temporal media;
        an interface enabling a user to specify a spatial relationship among the temporal media and the nontemporal media; and
        one or more outputs through which the temporal media are presented, and in which at
15   least the nontemporal media are presented at locations defined by the layout specification and with a temporal relationship with the temporal media as specified by the timeline, for each of one or more specified times along the timeline.

13.   The graphical user interface of claim 12, wherein the spatial relationship further
20   includes an association between at least one of the one or more first tracks and a display location.

14.   The graphical user interface of claim 12, further comprising a time bar associated with the timeline and manipulable by a user to specify the one or more specified times.
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15.   A method for publishing a streaming media presentation containing temporal media and events associated with references to nontemporal media combined according to a timeline and a layout specification, comprising:
        confirming availability of all of the data files including the temporal and nontemporal
30   media in the streaming media presentation;
        encoding the streaming media presentation;
        transferring the streaming media presentation to a first streaming media server; and

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transferring the nontemporal media data files to a second server.

16.   The method of claim 15, further comprising previewing the streaming media presentation from the first streaming media server.

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17.   The method of claim 15, further comprising previewing the streaming media presentation before transferring the streaming media presentation.

18.   The method of claim 15, further comprising setting up a profile indicating account

10   access information, a pathname for reading, a pathname for writing for each of the first and second servers and associated with a name.

19.   The method of claim 18, wherein encoding uses the profile to create the streaming media presentation.

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20.   A system for providing a service to an author for publishing a multimedia presentation, comprising:

        an encoder having a first input for receiving a timeline comprising one or more first tracks for temporal media and one or more second tracks for nontemporal media, a second

20   input for receiving a layout specification indicating an association between each of the one or more first tracks and one or more second tracks and a display location and having an output for providing a streaming media presentation containing the temporal media and the nontemporal media combined according to the timeline and the layout specification;

        a transfer tool for transferring the streaming media presentation file to a first media

25   server and the nontemporal media to a second media server;

        wherein the user has a first account for the streaming media server;

        wherein the user has a second account for the second media server; and

        wherein the authoring tool has an association with a service that provides the streaming media server.

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21.   A system for providing a service to authors for creating and publishing multimedia presentations, accessible remotely by an authoring tool capable of transferring data between the authoring tool and the system, comprising:

an account management system enabling multiple users to register, each with a
5   username and password and billing information;

a server including computer readable storage media having storage space allocated for each of the registered users, for publishing multimedia presentations for access through a publicly accessible computer network;

a media publication management system for interacting with the authoring tool to
10   enable transfer of streaming media from multimedia presentations from the authoring tool to the server; and

a media access management system accessible by each registered user and enabling each registered user to transfer multimedia data from the system to the authoring tool for use in a multimedia presentation.

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22.   A method for publishing a presentation specified by a timeline including a plurality of tracks and a layout defining a spatial relationship among media in the plurality of tracks, comprising:

receiving an indication of a distribution format for the presentation and one or more
20   destination storage locations;

for each file referred to in the timeline of the presentation, create a file name for the file in the one or more destination storage locations;

encoding the presentation in the distribution format using the file names in the one or more destination storage locations and indicating the spatial relationship; and

25   transferring the encoded presentation and each file to the one or more destination storage locations.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising verifying connections with the destination storage location before transferring.

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24. The method of claim 22, wherein the one or more destination storage locations includes a first media streaming server for the encoded presentation and a second server for each file referred to in the timeline of the presentation